178 standards demanded have risen; and luxuries, once almost
511 unheard of, are now becoming part of the expected pattern of the life of the countryman (Section 2). For most of these new needs the farmer has required money. Hence progress, to him, has become synonomous with the acquisition
178 of more money. Branches of banks have appeared in some
511 villages in both islands since 1945 and the countryman is
454 coming to accept this means of storing his accumulated
[453] wealth. The concern for bigger interest, first noted by the 1911 Commissioners, is replacing the traditional mere accumulation of wealth whether in money or in jewellery and other valuables.

178 There is still, however, a very strong element of
181 accumulation rather than investment in the finances of the
454 farmer. This is particularly the case with the older
511 generation who, as always, cling to the ways of the past because their lack of formal education makes them, apparently, unable to comprehend or adapt themselves to the workings of the present. Thus it is held that, while the younger generation have sought to urbanize themselves socially and economically with the money which now comes their way, many of the older generation, that is to say those who are tending to stay in farming today, have taken the 'new' money but have not changed their way of life or living standards to anything like the same extent. Thus dress, for example, is no sure indication of a farmer's wealth in terms of money and one hears of bare-foot, shabbily clothed countrymen with savings of £1000 or more. In traditional Maltese village society the uniformity which was the keynote (Section 1) encouraged the farmer to appear like his neighbour lest he be accused of deviationary tendencies: this feeling is often revealed today in the reluctance of the farmer to be the first to try a new method or crop in his fields for fear of becoming a laughing-stock.

Although the older generation do not strive to demonstrate their wealth in dress, habits, a new house, etc., and do not share the anxiety of the younger villager that he should look like a townsman and move to a 'good' - i.e. non-rural - district, their saving is not completely without aim. To resolve this point fully it would be necessary to consider the whole complex of traditional Maltese village society but for the present discussion some major features only will be outlined.

178 Dowry is one feature of traditional Maltese society
583 which is currently assuming different proportions to those
183 earlier held. It was regarded in the past as essential

178 583 183 [554] for a man to provide his marrying daughter with as substantial a dowry as possible. This was partly in kind: land, animals, etc., and partly in money. The size of a girl's dowry was one of the indications of social position and for many a poor man the provision of it would represent sacrifice and saving over many years, especially where there were several marriageable daughters in one family. In the past, many farmers' sons could expect to find brides among the families of the same village and farming background. [182] Thus a dowry of land or other property was an admirable way of building a farm-holding and was one of the counters to fragmentation consequent upon the system of land inheritance (B/525). Such an arrangement caused the minimum disruption in work and residence. However, as contacts between parts of the Islands have increased and marriages between individuals from different villages and also from differing economic backgrounds have become more common, a dowry of land is often quite inappropriate. Money takes its place and the desire for financial accumulation on the part of the fathers of girls of marriageable age leads them to put more emphasis on money and its investment.

178 454 423 471 Another development which has put money into an altogether new perspective for the Maltese farmer has been his growing desire to own the house in which he lives. As seen (Section 2), most of the land worked by the farmers in the Islands is not owned by the operator concerned and this applies to the farm buildings and the house occupied by the family. As the farmer becomes ownership-conscious the first step is understandably to acquire his own home, a feature observed by the 1911 Commissioners. Having bought his house, the farmer turns his attention to the purchase of other parts of the land which he cultivates, but, even before doing this, he wants capital to enable him to build up the live-stock side of his holding. The importance of meat and dairy stock-raising (v. Section 2) has increased rapidly in recent years - especially since the 1939-45 War, and the need for capital in such cases is clearly much greater than in a farm unit based solely on arable cultivation where lease- or rental-holding is a convenient and accepted method of tenure (B/525).

178 654 [426] Similarly, the spread of mechanization in Maltese farming after 1945 (v. Section 2) brought in a need for capital. The Government added to this money consciousness with financial encouragement to farmers (in an effort to keep them on the land) in the form of very low interest loans for capital improvements of the farms and their equipment. The Government policy in connexion with milk

*159 156 461 626 517 493 make money, but he has little sympathy for the older people around him and they in their turn regard him as a social (as well as economic) rebel. He takes little part in the social life of the village. Work is his first concern and he is most annoyed when the priest, with whom he has "not been on speaking terms" since his return from Australia, forbids his working on Sundays. This includes even repair work on the machinery indoors. He knows well enough that were he to plow on Sundays or fests days he would be "publically ostracised and no villager would hire him and his plow". His relaxation is his motor-cycle on which he escapes at high speed from time to time along with others of his generation who "have eyes for the lights of Valletta rather than farming".

*159 156 593 Towards his own parents Ġanni's attitude is typical. He regards his father as belonging to the old generation of illiterate or semi-literate countryfolk, steeped in the conservatism of the past and the traditional. Father and son argue continuously over points of policy - with Ġanni tending to assume that his education and wider experience entitles him to something of a 'casting vote' in such arguments. Nevertheless the family tie is there and is strong enough for Ġanni to have an innate respect for his father despite the gulf in education and ideas. Thus Ġanni supported his father's scheme to plant some cotton even though he himself doubted the profitability of this move (1958).

*159 156 [583] Marriage in Malta, where the "evil dowry" ('data') system is maintained, holds little attraction for Ġanni. He observes that he cannot take a girl out on his motor-cycle without the older people of the village criticising him for not marrying her first. This and the whole social climate of village life in Malta of which it is part clashes with the ways he learned in Australia and with the ideas and beliefs which his education and his knowledge of the world outside the village of his birth have brought him.

Ġanni is primarily important to the village because he is staying there. He takes little part in village affairs, he does not "bother about festas", and he has few close friends in his age group of farmers. But his ideas and the new methods and implements which he has brought to the village in face of considerable opposition and ridicule are a significant item in the changing scene of Maltese farming.

[198]

CASE XV

*159 402 407 000 Three brothers work together as a team. Their father works the land full-time and the brothers join him when their joint tractor-hire business is not claiming their attention. Their mechanical activities began some twenty-two years ago and now extend over more than a sixth of the area of Malta. They appear to have been among the first in the tractor

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

584 ness of the connection, without at all consulting the inclinations of their children.

[675] [431] [583] The articles of the contract having been settled, and the marriage portion agreed upon, the young man sent his intended bride a present consisting of a certain fish ornamented with garlands of ribband, with a ring or some costly jewel in its mouth.

The first interview was then fixed to take place in presence of the parents and their kinsfolk, best friends, and neighbours, who were regaled with sweetmeats and other refreshments.

[989] Before this meeting took place, the mothers of the two young people retired either into an arbour in the garden or some separate apartment, where they prepared a mixture of aniseed, aromatic plants, salt, and honey